

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /064 W

-----032312Z 058201 /61

R 031911Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8424

INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

ALL EC CAPITALS 0286

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PGOV, FR

SUBJECT: CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL OKAYS EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT VOTE

REF: PARIS 33098

SUMMARY: ON DECEMBER 30, FRENCH CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL DECLARED THAT GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL TO ELECT FRENCH REPRESENTATIVES TO EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT DIRECTLY THROUGH UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE IS IN CONFORMITY WITH THE CONSTITUTION OF 1958. THIS DECISION ASSURES THAT OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF GAULLISTS WILL VOTE FOR IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION WHEN IT COMES BEFORE PARLIAMENT NEXT APRIL, THEREBY ELIMINATING THIS ISSUE AS A MAJOR PROBLEM FOR GISCARD IN 1977. END SUMMARY

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1. THE COUNCIL'S DECISION, NO SURPRISE TO MOST OBSERVERS, NOW PUTS THE POLITICAL PROBLEM SQUARELY TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, WHICH WILL DEBATE THE QUESTION OF DIRECT ELECTIONS IN THE SPRING SESSION BEGINNING APRIL 2. THE POLITICS OF THAT DEBATE ARE FAIRLY CLEAR (REFTEL): WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE COMMUNISTS, WHO MAINTAIN THEIR TOTAL OPPOSITION TO THE ENTIRE EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE, ALL

PARTIES, INCLUDING MOST GAULLIST DEPUTIES, WILL VOTE FOR THE BILL. THE GAULLISTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN ASSURED THAT THE ELECTION WILL BE IN THE FORM OF PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SO AS TO AVOID DIVIDING FRANCE INTO REGIONS FOR THIS PURPOSE. ALTHOUGH THE OUTCOME OF THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE IS CLEAR, WHAT IS FAR LESS CLEAR IS THE WAY IN WHICH THE EUROPEAN ISSUES WILL AFFECT THE DIFFERENT POLITICAL PARTIES INTERNALLY.

2. VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF SEVERAL POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE WASTED NO TIME IN MAKING QUITE CLEAR THAT THEY WILL RESPECT NO PARTY TIES IN THEIR EFFORTS TO ARGUE AGAINST FURTHER EUROPEANIZATION. THE PS LEFTWING CERES SEEKS TO DIFFERENTIATE ITSELF FROM THE MAIN BODY OF THE PS WHICH WILL VOTE IN FAVOR OF THE BILL. GAULLIST ELDER STATESMAN ALEXANDRE SANGUINETTI SAYS THAT HE WILL TAKE HIS OBJECTION AS FAR AS A "RUPTURE" WITH THE RPR, BUT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANY RPR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, INCLUDING MICHEL DEBRE, WILL GO THAT FAR. AS FOR THE COMMUNISTS, THE REAL ISSUE IS THE EXTENT TO WHICH AN INTEGRATED EUROPE COULD BE "THE TOOL THROUGH WHICH AN AMERICAN-GERMAN COMBINE WILL DIRECT FRANCE'S DESTINY." WHILE ALL OF THESE POSITIONS WILL PROVIDE INTERESTING NEWS COPY FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, THE ISSUE HAS CLEARLY BEEN ELIMINATED AS A POSSIBLE SOURCE OF GRIEF TO GISCARD AND HIS GOVERNMENT. NOR WILL IT DIVIDE THE FRAGILE GOVERNMENTAL MAJORITY IN THE ELECTORAL PERIOD.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS, ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 03-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PARIS00107
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770002-0498
Format: TEL
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770185/aaaacwfb.tel
Line Count: 89
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1cdde4dd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 PARIS 33098
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3672849
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL OKAYS EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT VOTE
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PGOV, FR, EP
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1cdde4dd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009